Josh Nieves-Hurley

TELL Draft

April 21, 2015

It was early in the morning and Mr. Smith and I were doing the usual routine: Practice, practice, practice. Mr. Smith was my high school choir director, and every morning we practiced for Regional chorus. In order to get to All-State chorus, you had to first successfully audition for District chorus. Then at Districts, you would re-audition for Regionals, finally auditioning for States once you got there. Everyone who makes it to All-State chorus has a big picture of them put up on the wall by the auditorium, and for me this was always a dream.

So that day when we were practicing, Mr. Smith decided to take a break and pull me aside for a private chat. “Look,” he said. “All of these people that you see on the wall; they didn’t have any more talent than you do, they just wanted it more and were willing to work for it.” At that moment I knew he could tell I wasn’t practicing as hard as I should’ve been. He continued, “From what I’ve seen through years of doing these auditions, you have the voice that they’re looking for. I think you can be very successful if you just work for it.”

So I started to work harder, and harder. I wasn’t exactly working hard for myself though, but rather for Mr. Smith. The main priority on my mind was to not let him down and have him on my ass again. Now don’t get me wrong, I definitely wanted it, but honestly I didn’t think I stood a chance at making it all the way to states that year. That was at least until I actually re-auditioned. I was very shocked to see the results come back that informed me that I had jumped from a ranking of 29th in my voice part all the way up to 2nd. That’s when it really sank in that Mr. Smith knew what he was talking about. I continued to work just as hard and successfully made it into All-State chorus. My picture now hangs on the wall by the auditorium and without the help and nudge from Mr. Smith I don’t know if that would have been possible.